RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 14th March, 2002/23 Phalguna, 1923 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr. Chairman *in the Chair.*

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Territorial demarcation between India and Bangladesh

*161. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the territorial demarcation between India and Bangladesh has not been completed and settled, so far;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken to resolve the issue and by when an amicable settlement is expected to be arrived at?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) A Statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) While the survey authorities of the two countries have completed demarcation of over 4000 kms of the India-Bangladesh boundary, they have not been able to resolve differences in demarcation of about 6.5 kms and have referred the matter to the respective Governments. There are also outstanding issues relating to exchange of enclaves and adverse possessions.

2. The Government of India is keen on an early settlement of all boundary-related matters with Bangladesh in accordance with the terms of the India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement of 1974. The Government have agreed to constitute Joint Boundary Working Groups to address all pending matters. The first meeting of the India-Bangladesh Joint Boundary Working Groups on Border Demarcation, and on Enclaves and Adversely Possessed Territories was held in Dhaka from July 2—4, 2001. In the meeting both sides

presented their respective positions on these matters in order to facilitate a clear understanding of each others' points of view and to address the issues in a pragmatic and time-bound manner. The subsequent meetings of the Joint Boundary Working Groups could not take place earlier on account of change of Government in Bangladesh *viz.* the handing over of power to a neutral caretaker Government on 15 July 2001 and holding of General Elections in early October 2001. The dates for the holding of the next meeting of the Joint Boundary Working Groups have been proposed to Bangladesh and their response is awaited.

3. The ratification of the Land Boundary Agreement would be completed expeditiously on completion of demarcation.

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Sir, almost 30 years have passed, but this Indo-Bangladesh border dispute has not yet been resolved. Because of this, a lot of problems are creeping up like infiltration, ill-treatment of the Border Security Force at the hands of the Bangladesh Rifles. In his reply, the hon. Minister has said that demarcation of over 4,000 Km had been completed, and a corridor of 6.5 km apart from outstanding issues relating to exchange of enclaves and adverse possessions were still left. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any deadline has been fixed in regard to the 6.5 km area and enclaves and adverse possessions.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, I shall endeavour to answer this question directly. The hon. Members has made an averment that it is this 6.5 km of Indo-Bangladesh border, which has not yet been demarcated which, in fact, is contributing to infiltration. I would urge the hon. Member not to link infiltration with this 6.5 km. The nature of the border itself is such that it, in fact, permits infiltration from both the sides and infiltration by its very nature does not depend on visas and passports. It is an illegal use of the openness of the border. We have not yet been able to demarcate this 6.5 km area because of various reasons. So far as setting up of a deadline for demarcation is concerned, it would be an impractical way to do it. We are moving towards it with a sense of urgency. In fact, the Joint Boundary Working Group on Border Demarcation is to meet next week, if I

am not mistaken. We are meeting frequently to resolve this issue. Sir, you would appreciate that because of the federal nature of our Constitution as also our polity the State Governments are also involved when it comes to settling such complex border issues. Therefore, without giving any deadline by which we will do it, I do assure the hon. Member and the House that we are seized of this issue and we are approaching it with a high sense of urgency.

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Sir, infiltration is the biggest problem so far as the Indo-Bangladesh border is concerned. There was a proposal to fence the entire border. I would like to know from the hon. Minister. What is the status of this plan of fencing the entire border? Secondly, there are some villages where half the houses fall in India and the remaining half fall in Bangladesh. it is causing a major problem in fencing the border.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, the nature of the Indo-Bangladesh border is such that it is very difficult to fence the entire border. Out of 4,000 km of the border, there is a proper fencing only in a fraction of it. A large part of this border is riverine; a large part of this border keeps changing, as the rivers keep changing their course. On account of these various factors, infiltration cannot be stopped simply by putting barbed wire fences on this very difficult terrain, on this very difficult border. There are complex social and economic reasons behind the infiltration, the illegal infiltration, from Bangladesh. There are economic factors; there are factors of land, and unless all these are taken into account, it will be impractical and unwise to address it in one particular manner.

DR. M.N. DAS: Sir, will the hon. Minister to pleased be inform the House as to whether there is any restriction on the entry of thousands of Bangladeshi fishermen into the territorial waters of India? They come by steamboats and create trouble. As far as the coastal area of my State, Orissa, is concerned, they not only catch fish, but they also take away turtles, and it also gives them an opportunity to infiltarte into our coastal areas. I would like to know whether any steps are being taken to check this kind of infiltration.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, the hon. Member has moved from

land borders to river borders. That is all right. I would still answer his supplementary. I would like to inform the hon. Member that there are restrictions. After all, these are India's territorial borders. We have some unresolved issues about the New Moore Island, etc. in regard to isles and territorial waters. That is altogether a different aspect. But, on India's territorial waters, do we have instances of illegal fishing? Yes; we do have it. We have it both on the East Coast and on the West Coast. In the West Coast, for instance, we have it from Pakistan. We have difficulties in regard to Pakistani fishermen being arrested by the Indian Coast Guard Authorities and Indian fishermen, particularly from Gujarat, being arrested by the Pakistani Coast Guard Authorities. We have similar difficulties, for example, in the Southern area, between Sri Lanka and India. On the Bay of Bengal, we have difficulties with Bangladesh as also with Thailand. But, with Myanmar, it is very difficult because in the case of territorial waters, we have no defined line that we can say that from here onwards, it is Indian territorial water or, from that side onwards, it will be Myanmarian Territorial water. The Government takes it up with them whenever such instances are brought to our notice and we do not encourage any fishing either by Bangladesh or by Thailand in India's territorial waters.

श्री संजय निरुपम: आदरणीय सभापति जी, कोई भी देश तब तक सुरक्षित नहीं रह सकता जब तक उसकी सीमाएं सुरक्षित नहीं होती। हिन्दुस्तान और बंगलादेश की जो सीमाएं हैं, वे सुरक्षित नहीं है और स्वयं हमारे माननीय विदेश मंत्री स्वीकार कर रहे हैं कि वहां जो इल्लीगल इनफिल्ट्रेशन है, उसको रोका नहीं जा सकता। उन्होंने सही कहा कि डीमार्केशन के लिए कोई डेडलाइन तय नहीं की जा सकती है लेकिन जिस पार्ट का अभी तक डीमार्केशन नहीं हुआ है, उसको अगर छोड़ दें तो बाकी जितने हिस्से का डीमार्केशन हो चुका है, क्या उसकी फेंसिंग की कोई डेडलाइन तय नहीं की जा सकती? मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि माननीय मंत्री महोदय इसकी कोई एक डेडलाइन बताएंगे?

दूसरी बात यह है कि बंगलादेश राइफल्स ने पिछले साल बी॰एस॰एफ॰ के जवानों की जिस तरह से बर्बर हत्या की थी, उसका सीधा नाता सीमा विवाद से था। उस समय पूरा देश इस घटना को लेकर बहुत आंदोलित हो गया था। हम लोग भी सदन में बहुत आंदोलित थे और एक पैशन के साथ हम लोगों ने इस पर चर्चा की थी। सरकार ने कहा था कि हम इस बारे में बंगलादेश सरकार से बात करेंगे और कुछ न कुछ किया जाएगा। इस पूरी की पूरी कार्यवाही को

ऐसे तो नहीं छोड़ा जा सकता। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि उस संदर्भ में सरकार ने क्या कोई कदम उठाया? बंगलादेश सरकार के खिलाफ कोई मुकदमा या कोई कार्यवाही की है और नई सरकार आने के बाद आपकी इस संदर्भ में उनसे कोई बातचीत हुई है?

श्री जसवंत सिंह: सभापति जी, माननीय सदस्य के प्रश्न के दो भाग हैं। एक तो यह कि जो चार हजार किलोमीटर की सीमा है उसमें साढ़े छह किलोमीटर छोड़कर, जो सीमा है, उस पर तारबंदी की कोई डेडलाइन है या नहीं है। इस संबंध में मैं माननीय सदस्य से फिर निवेदन करूंगा कि भारत-बंगलादेश की जो सीमा है उस समूची सीमा पर तारबंदी संभव नहीं है। संभव इसलिए नहीं है क्योंकि बहुत-सी सीमा तारबंदी के लायक नहीं है, मसलन जहां नदियां हैं। माननीय सदस्य जानते हैं कि उस क्षेत्र की नदियां चाहे असम से उतरें, चाहे भूटान से, चाहे नॉर्थ ईस्ट से, वे पहाड़ों से ही उतरती हैं और तेज रफ्तार से उतरती हैं। उतरने के बाद वे सपाट फैलती हैं। इन नदियों की तारबंदी में सबसे बड़ी कठिनाई यह है कि इन नदियों का प्रवाह हर साल बदलता रहता है। अगर मैं आपसे यह कहूं कि जो साढ़े छह किलोमीटर की सीमा बाकी है, उस पर इतने सालों के अंदर तारबंदी हो जाएगी तो मैं आपको भ्रमित करूंगा। इस संबंध में एक स्थिति यह है कि जब डीमार्केशन हो जाता है तो उसके लिए एक संवैधानिक आवश्यकता होती है कि हम उसे रैक्टीफाई करें। हम उसे अभी तक रैक्टीफाई नहीं कर पाए हैं और इस संबंध में संवैधानिक आवश्यकता यही है कि जब तक समूचा बॉर्डर डीमार्केट नहीं होता आप बाकी को रैक्टीफाई नहीं कर सकते।

पिरदीवा की जिस घटना का आपने उल्लेख किया, जिसमें बॉर्डर सिक्योरिटी फोर्स के जवानों की हत्या हुई थी, उस संबंध में मैं बताना चाहता हूं कि उस वक्त भी सरकार ने इसे बहुत गंभीरता से लिया था। अगर आपको याद हो तो उन दिनों में बंगलादेश में चुनाव होने जा रहे थे परंतु उस वक्त भी सरकार ने इसे बड़ी गंभीरता के साथ बंगलादेश सरकार के साथ विचारित किया था। बंगलादेश में इस घटना पर एक जांच कमेटी बिठाई गई है। वहां जो हमारे राजनयिक प्रतिनिधि हैं, उन्होंने भी इस मामले को उठाया था। चुनावों के बाद जो नई सरकार आई है उसके साथ भी सरकार ने इसे पुनः उठाया है। माननीय प्रधान मंत्री की बंगलादेश की नई सरकार से बातचीत हुई है। उन्होंने भी इस मसले को उठाया है। मैंने भी स्वयं अपने सहयोगी, जो वहां के विदेश मंत्री हैं, से कहा है। बंगलादेश सरकार इस संबंध में जांच पूरी कर रही है और उन्होंने आश्वस्त किया है कि जांच के जो परिणाम होंगे उससे हमें अवगत कराएंगे।

SHRI KULDIP NAYYAR: You reffered to economic consideration. Apparently, that means, people from that side are

coming to this side for comparatively better economic opportunities. The Government had announced that it would introduce work permits. Has that been done? What is the progress?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Yes, Sir; I will answer both. The economic aspect, really, is not just one of work, because a very important aspect of economic consideration is land. As the hon. Member knows, both in North Bengal, as also in Assam, Tripura, and also in Meghalaya, in comparison to Bangladesh, land is relatively easier to access—uptil now, certainly—and that is why large parts of forest land have got illegally encroached upon in these States. The other economic aspect, self-evidently, is job opportunity, and without doubt whatsoever, because of economic disparities between Bangladesh and, for example, West Bengal, people from Bangladesh do seek economic opportunities, even in Calcutta. I don't have to go to Calcutta; the hon. Member, no doubt, knows the reality of what is happening in Nizamuddin or what is being pointed out about East Delhi. So, various factors, both social and economic, have contributed to this, and we have not endeavoured to address this problem in various ways. It is not simply a law and order problem. It is a very complex issue, and it has to be addressed in its entirety and full complexity. Yes, Sir, the work permit system was introduced, but you would appreciate that a work permit can only be for a legal entry. Work permit for illegal infiltration is completely out of question. So, whenever citizens from Bangladesh legally, after visa application, have also sought work permits, it is addressed in a positive manner.

SHRI RANGANATH MISRA: Sir, I would like to know whether this six-and-a-half kilometres are in one stretch or it is in parts, in different enclaves. If it is in enclaves, then, why are these enclaves not being exchanged? A delay of about 53 years has already taken place in this regard?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, first, let me say whether they are in one State or in three differet States. This six-and-a-half kilometres are in three sectors. Belonia, which is in Tripura; it is only 1.6 kilometres long. Then, there is Lalitula-Dumabari, which is in

Assam; it is about 3 kilometres long.Then, there is Dhaighata-56 which is one-and-a-half kilometres long, and it is in West Bengal. These three have not yet really got completed because the two survey teams of India and Bangladesh are unable to arrive at an agreement as to where does the line actually run.

Sir, the hon. Member also spoke of enclaves, which is a very complex issue. There are Indian enclaves on the Bangladesh side and Bangladesh enclaves on the Indian side. The Government has told the Government of Bangladesh that before the enclaves are exchanged, let a census be conducted in the enclaves of Bangladesh which are to be exchanged with the Indian enclaves. The hon. Member would appreciate that India regularly conducts census. I cannot speak with similar assurance about census operations in other countries. We are asking for a census to be conducted, because when enclaves are exchanged, then, naturally the population will also be exchanged. And, when population is exchanged, we wish to be quite clear in our mind that this is the population that lived in enclave 'a' or 'b' and not a multiple of the population that then sought or claimed Indian citizenship simply on account of transfer of enclaves. It is a second aspect, which is why, these enclaves are also part of the territories of the States of the Indian Union. The States have to be consulted. Neither the Government of India nor the Ministry of External Affairs arbitrarily, on its own, can take these decisions. So, we are in regular consultation; as Ministry of External Affairs, we are in regular consultation with the States concerned, whether it is West Bengal or Assam or Meghalaya or Tripura. We try to keep the States fully on board in the resolution of such issues.

There is the third aspect, which is adverse possession. Now, I won't go into the aspect of adverse possession of land between Bangladesh and India, but that too creates difficulties and complications in the India Bangladesh border.

SHRI RANGANATH MISRA: In international law, there is no term like 'adverse possession'.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sorry, I could not hear you.

SHRI RANGANATH MISRA: Independent countries cannot have

the issue of adverse possession, in terms of international law. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: I don't wish to—I can scarcely—dispute a jurist, a legal luminary like you. How can an independent country have adverse possession? But this is the reality. I think, I could be corrected on the exactness. If I am not mistaken, the adverse possession between India and Bangladesh, without going into the exactness of how many each has, is actually in excess of 1700. It can be tiny pockets of land; sometimes, not more than a few metres. But this is a reality of that boundary. When the boundary shifts, the adverse possession goes to the other side. Theoretically, what you say is entirely correct. Sir, how can an independent country permit adverse possession? यह कोई खेती की जमीन का मसला तो है नहीं कि उसकी जमीन पर मैंने कब्जा कर लिया और मेरी जमीन पर उसने कब्जा कर लिया। पर यह रियलिटी है। यहां एडवर्स पजेशन है और हम इसको समझाने की कोशिश में लगे हैं।

श्री राजीव रंजन सिंह "ललन": माननीय मंत्री जी ने यह स्वीकार भी किया है कि भारत बंगलादेश सीमा जो है, वह घुसपैठ की समस्या के साथ साथ, अभी जो हाल फिलहाल में समाचार आए हैं उनके अनुसार उग्रवादियों के पलायन का रास्ता भी हो रही है। माननीय मंत्री जी ने उत्तर में बताया है कि जो 4 हजार किलोमीटर की सीमा है उसमें वहां की प्राकृतिक स्थिति और भौगोलिक परिस्थित के कारण कंटीले तारों से घेरा नहीं लगाया जा सकता है। सीमा विवाद अगर पूरा खत्म भी हो जाता है और अगर घेराबंदी नहीं की जाएगी। तो उसके बाद भी हमारी सीमा असुरक्षित रह जाएगी। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि इसके अभाव में, घेराबंदी के अभाव में कौन सी वैकल्पिक व्यवस्था, सुदृढ़ व्यवस्था की गयी है जिससे कि घुसपैठ और उग्रवादियों का पलायन रोका जा सके?

श्री जसवंत सिंह: सभापति जी, माननीय सदस्य ने दो सवाल पूछे हैं—घुसपैठ और उग्रवादी। वैसे जो इल्लीगल इम्मिग्रेशन जिसे आप घुसपैठ कह रहे हैं—जैसे अभी पहले कोशिश की जवाब देने की वे सभी उग्रवादी नहीं है। उसके पीछे बहुत सारे कारण जैसे, एक आर्थिक कारण है, जमीन से जुड़ा कारण हो सकता है। बंगलादेश में नौकरी नहीं है, जमीन नहीं है, तो वे काम तलाशते असम पहुंचते हैं, मेघालय पहुंचते हैं, त्रिपुरा पहुंचते हैं, पश्चिमी बंगाल पहुंचते हैं। वे सभी उग्रवादी नहीं हैं। इल्लीगल इनफिलट्रेशन जरूर है।

श्री राजीव रंजन सिंह "ललन": माननीय मंत्री जी, मैंने उग्रवादियों के पलायन का, भागने का रास्ता कहा। मैं उग्रवादियों के भागने के बारे में पूछ रहा हूं।

श्री जसवंत सिंहः मैं समझ रहा हूं। दूसरा आपका पहलू है कि कई ऐसे उग्रवादी या उग्रवादी गुट जो पूर्वांचल या असम में हों वे शायद बंगलादेश में शरण लेते हैं। यही आपका आशय है।

श्री राजीव रंजन सिंह "ललन": जैसे गोधरा की घटना के बाद हुआ।

श्री जसवंत सिंहः सरकार इसके बारे में में सचेत है, सजग है और हम बार-बार बंगलादेश सरकार से इस प्रश्न को उठाते हैं। जब भी बैठकें होती हैं, हमारा हाई कमीशन इसको लाता है। हम स्वयं इस बारे में की बार चर्चा कर चुके हैं। बंगलादेश सरकार का कहना है कि हम भारत के साथ पूरा सहयोग करेंगे और भारत के किसी भी उग्रवादी को हम बंगलादेश में शरण नहीं देंगे। जब हमारे पास कोई अधिकृत जानकारी होती है तो हम बंगलादेश सरकार या उनके अधिकारियों से इस बारे में अवश्य उस मामले को उठाते हैं।

श्री अहमद पटेलः मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या उनके पास कोई ऐसे आंकड़े उपलब्ध हैं कि पिछले दो-तीन साल में इनफिल्ट्रेट्र्स या घुसपैठियों की संख्या बढ़ी है या कम हुई है और जैसे आपने कहा कि यह फेन्सिंग मुश्किल है, वह मुश्किल, है तो क्या आपके पास कोई योजना है, क्या आप कोई ठोस कदम उठाने जा रहे हैं जिससे इनफिलेट्रेशन या घुसपैठ को रोका जा सके?

श्री जसवंत सिंहः माननीय सदस्य ने एक तो कहा कि कोई ऐसे आंकड़े हैं, आप पहचानेंगे, मैं अधिकृत रूप में कोई आंकड़े आपको दूं तो फिर वह इलीगल इनफिल्ट्रेशन कैसे रह गया? इलीगल का अर्थ यही है कि वह चोरी-छिपे है तो एक मोटे रूप से हमारा गृह मंत्रालय व अन्य एजेंसीज अनुमान लगाती हैं कि ऐसा कई बार जैसा आंखों के सामने दिखता है जैसा मैंने दिल्ली के कुछ क्षेत्रों का उदाहरण दिया, तो मैं आपको भ्रमित नहीं कर सकता कि मैं आपको कहूं कि हमारे पास कोई अधिकृत आंकड़ा है। संसद् में मैं अगर आपको अधिकृत आंकड़े के तौर पर कुछ कहता हूं तो वह मेरे लिए ठीक नहीं होगा। परन्तु निश्चित रूप से इलीगल इनफिल्ट्रेशन हो रहा है, इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं है। यह आज से नहीं, कई वर्षों से चल रहा है। यह चिंता का विषय है और इसे रोकना है। बंगला देश से जब हम इस प्रश्न को उठाते हैं तो वह कहते हैं कि कोई इलीगल इनफिल्ट्रेशन नहीं है। बात-चीत वहां समाप्त नहीं हुई है। माननीय सदस्य ने जानना चाहा है कि क्या कोई योजना है, निश्चित रूप से यह मात्र केन्द्र सरकार की जिम्मेदारी नहीं बनती, बल्कि राज्य सरकारों की भी उतनी ही या उससे ज्यादा जिम्मेदारी बनती है, क्योंकि जो राज्य बंगला देश से जुड़े हैं और जिनको इलीगल इनफिल्ट्रेशन का सीधा परिणाम भुगतना पड़ता है, चाहे सामाजिक तौर पर हो, जमीनी तौर पर हो या आर्थिक तौर पर हो, उन्हें भी इस समस्या के प्रति इससे ज्यादा नहीं तो उतना ही सजग अवश्य होना पड़ेगा। सरकार का और हमारे

मंत्रालय का यह प्रयत्न रहता है कि हम राज्य सरकारों के साथ एक समुचित व्यवस्था करें। राज्य सरकारें इसमें सजग हों। यह मात्र सीमा पर बॉर्डर सैक्योरिटी फोर्स का हर इंच पर एक सिपाही खड़ा हो जाएगा और लोगों को आने से रोकेगा तो यह संभव नहीं है और आप इस बात को मानेंगे भी। इसलिए इसके बारे में एक प्रकार की जागरुकता उत्पन्न करनी पड़ेगी। सरकार प्रयत्न कर रही है और राज्य सरकारों के साथ मिल करके यह काम करना पड़ेगा। यह हमारा प्रयत्न है।

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Sir, our country, probably, is the only country in the world which does not maintain a register of citizens. As a result, there is a large scale infiltration from Bangladesh through the North-Eastern border. In many areas, these Bangladeshis become voters and they have started deciding the political destiny of the Indian citizens who are residing in India. Now, Sir, there are certain agencies which every year detect illegal infiltrators from Bangladesh. It is happening not only in the North-East but also in Delhi, Mumbai and other parts of India. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any agreement with the Government of Bangladesh with regard to the repatriation of these Bangladeshis, who are detected as illegal infiltrators. My second question is, whether the Government of India is planning to maintain a register of citizens so that nobody from any part of the world becomes a citizen and a voter of this country. I think, there is no such register maintained for the Indian citizens. These are my two specific questions.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir the hon. Member has my full sympathy. I have known the hon. Member since he was a student leader of Assam as a Member of AASU and thereafter at least for 20 years, if not more. Sir, as far as the national register of citizens is concerned, this is a very wise suggestion and this a very worthy suggestion. It has often come up that like most countries in the world, if we are having a census, perhaps, we ought to have a national register of citizens. It is not separated from the multi-purpose identity cards. It is also a card for national identity. It can serve as a ration card, etc. These and various other proposals have been considered by a number of Governments; not just the present Government. The hon. Member would appreciate that the perparation of a National Register

of Citizens can simply not be the responsibility or the task of the Central Government alone. It is very much a joint activity between the States of the Union and the Centre and it is a Herculean task, when you are talking of a billion human beings. Nevertheless, it is a worthy suggestion. But, at the present moment, it has not been implemented.

The other point is relating to repatriation. Here again, the State Governments come in because, the identification of an illegal entrant, having been determined by the law of the land, has to be done by the State concerned. Thereafter, the State Governments have to hand over the illegal entrants to the Border Security Force; it is really a question of the State Governments addressing this issue with seriousness and with purpose. Unless the State Governments do it, it is not possible for the Central Government to do it from here, you would appreciate, in a federal country like ours.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Sir, my question was about the acceptability of Bangladeshis whom the Government authorities have detected. What is the opinion of the Government of India on this?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, quite often, this difficulty arises —whether it be Pakistan or Bangladesh—because, ethnically and racially, we are so similar.You have an illegal immigrant and our agencies take him up to the Bangladesh border and say, 'He is an illegal entrant. You must take him back to Bangladesh.' And, we come across instances when the Bangladesh authorities say, 'No; he is not an illegal entrant. He is your citizen.' Such events do occur. We address them as well as we can. That is why I am saying that it is a complex issue. One has to constantly be creating a climate in the country of responsibility in regard to illegal immigration so that we are able to address this issue.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, the hon. Minister has correctly pointed out that the problem of illegal immigration is a serious problem. And, more so, it has become a trend that people from smaller countries always migrate—definitely not legal—to the larger countries, illegally. This particular issue was discussed in the Group of Ministers set up by the Government to look into the overall

internal and external security of which the hon. Minister and Leader of the House was a member. We had the privilege of discussing this particular aspect of the Report on the floor of the House, and the same has been referred to in the President's Address. Two specific suggestions were made to take some steps to prevent the illegal immigration. The first one is: wiring of the entire border, to provide flood lighting and night vigilance and also providing in a limited way, some sort of citizenship identity card to the people living on the international border. Of course, it is not possible to provide identity cards even to people living in Bengal because you have eight crores of people in Bengal. But, surely, if you restrict issuing identity cards to the people living within five, six seven miles of the border area, it may be within manageable limit. Therefore, in this context, I would like to know from the hon. Minister—it was the recommendation of the Group of Ministers, and the Committee considered it—whether any effective progress has been made on this. If all the details are not readily available with him, he can collect the information and present it to the House.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, I am very grateful to hon. Pranabbabu for raising a question on the Report of the Group of Ministers. Yes, Sir; I did have the honour of being a member of that Committee. Again, yes, Sir; we have reported on this illegal immigration. We have pointed out the extreme seriousness of the situation. We have also underlined and emphasised that it does not simply limit itself only to socio-economic consequences. It has very damaging security implications. And it is vital that the Centre, as also the States of the Union, address themselves to illegal immigration. The hon. Member, thereafter, said, "We have made some recommendations for fencing. Yes, Sir; fencing is possible because when we, as a Group of Ministers, considered that, we considered the totality of the border, including our sea frontiers, which was something that was being done for the first time in 50 years. But I would not go into that. Now so far as land fencing on the Indo-Bangladesh border is concerned, I pointed out some difficulties. Wherever these difficulties do not exist, or can be overcome, fencing is in progress. A large chunk of that border has already been fenced.

But the fence is swept away. You know the problem. So far as night-vigilance devices are concerned, yes, Sir; there has been progress in that regard. I do not wish to go into the details what night-vigilance devices are there. But, both on the Western and also on the Eastern Border—naturally, with priority for the Western border—there is movement in this regard. (*Interruptions*) So far as identity cards are concerned, I can request the Ministry of Home Affairs to provide the details to you. I am informed that the Home Ministry has already moved in this direction. But, so far as the question, as to how much progress has been made, is concerned, right now, I am not in the knowledge of how much progress has been made. But I would request the Home Ministry to let you know directly, what has been done in that regard.

SHRI B.P. SINGHAL: Sir, has the Government explored the possibility of getting an interim fencing done, till the time the actual borders are determined? Based on the terrain, whichever is convenient this side or that side in that six-and-a-half kilometre area. That is the most difficult area. It makes for a lot of infiltration. Is this possibility being overlooked that we may have an interim border? After that when, the determination of the border takes place, we can have fencing. Otherwise there is found to be an indefinite wait about fencing the six-and-half kilometre border.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, I understand the anxiety of the hon. Member, the concern of the hon. Member. A number of other hon. Members have also asked about the timeframe within which we are going to do this fencing I appreciate what you have said. Shri Sanjay Nirupam, and the hon. Member prior to him, also asked about it. I appreciate their concern. You are also asking about the timeframe. (*Interruptions*)

श्री संजय निरुपम: सर, एप्रीसिएशन नहीं चाहिए, एक्शन चाहिए।

SHRI B. P. SINGHAL: No, Sir, I did not ask for any time-frame. I asked about the interim fencing. The final fencing can take place when the boundaries are decided. (*Interruptions*)

डा॰ वाई॰ लक्ष्मी प्रसादः सर, आन्ध्र प्रदेश के किसानों के बारे में चौथा प्रश्न है, लेकिन इस पहले प्रश्न पर ही 40 मिनट हो गए। इस प्रश्न पर और कितना समय लेंगे?

श्री जसवंत सिंहः मैं तो अपना काम कर रहा हूं। आपने जो प्रश्न किए हैं, उनके जवाब तो दूंगा।

डा॰ वाई॰ लक्ष्मी प्रसादः नहीं, नहीं, मैं आपसे नहीं, सभापति महोदय से निवेदन कर रहा हूं।

MR. CHAIRMAN: This question was raised in the earlier Session. I know many hon. Members were interested. That is why I gave time. It was my duty to give time. This question has been...(*Interruptions*)

DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Sir, then, let us have a half-an-hour discussion on it. (*Interruptions*)

सर, इसको हाफ-एन-आवर में ले लीजिएगा। आगे यह आन्ध्र प्रदेश के फार्मर्स का बहुत इम्पोर्टेण्ट क्वैश्चन है, पैडी के मिनिमम सपोर्ट प्राइस का क्वैश्चन है। इसलिए मैं आपसे यह गुजारिश कर रहा हूं कि अगर यह ज्यादा इम्पोर्टेण्ट हैं तो इसे हाफ-एन-आवर में ले लीजिए।

श्री सभापतिः हाफ-एन-आवर के लिए तो समय नहीं है।

AN HON. MEMBER: Sir, it is a very important question. (*Interruptions*) It concerns the security of the country. (*Interruptions*)

DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Question regarding minimum support price for farmers is also very important. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's all right. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Of the total fencable boundary on the Indo-Bangladesh border, roughly, about 800 kilometres have been fenced. We are working on a time-schedule of fencing it by 2006-2007. Interim fencing is not a practical proposition because wherever you put a fence, is your claim that your boundary runs there. The minute you put up a fence, it will raise a dispute. It is not a workable proposition.